



**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

Newark Transportation Improvement District Committee Meeting

Date/Time: Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting

Attendees

<u>Committee Members</u>	
Newark Planning and Development	Mary Ellen Gray, AICP
Newark Planning and Development	Mike Fortner, AICP
DeIDOT	Sarah Coakley, AICP
WILMAPCO	Heather Dunigan
University of Delaware	Nona Barrett
Newark Planning Commission	Alan Silverman
BikeNewark	Bob McBride
Newark Design Committee	Joe Charma, PE
Mayor's Appointee	David Levandoski
District 5 Representative	Jim Jones
<u>Other Attendees</u>	
Newark Public Works and Water Resources	Mike Falkowski, PE
University of Delaware	Evan Park
<u>Committee Support</u>	
AECOM	David Athey, PE
AECOM	Mayuresh Khare, PE, AICP, PP
AECOM	Savannah Edwards

Meeting Minutes

- The meeting started at 1:30 pm. Since the meeting was being held virtually, David Athey read the names of the attendees.
- David provided details for how the virtual meeting would be held.
- Minutes from the March 10, 2021 meeting were approved without exception.
- Sarah Coakley continued discussions from previous meetings regarding short-term and long-term improvements. See meeting materials. She indicated the results of assessing options for bicyclists would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- Sarah continued her presentation with an assessment of a potential connector road north and generally parallel to Cleveland Avenue including an exhibit that corrected the alignment from the March meeting. Modeling indicated that traffic volumes on this road would be very speed sensitive. The alignment would probably necessitate a 30 MPH speed. Savannah Edwards asked if traffic

volume data for Cleveland Avenue could be made available for comparison. She followed a moment later by stating daily volumes on Cleveland Avenue are between 18,000 and 22,000. Sarah said that about 60% of traffic or approximately 1,440 trips on the new road would be diverted from Cleveland Avenue. David Athey asked if Hopkins Road had been included in the assessment and Sarah replied that it had not. Mayuresh asked about the if White Clay Road with speed limit of 25mph can be used to tie in connector alignment to save some construction cost for the new connector. Sarah said DelDOT is not in favor of using White Clay Drive. Jim Jones stated that the major benefit of a new road would not be for another 10 years as the Country Club gets developed. Alan Silverman agreed. Sarah indicated that these considerations would warrant a more complete analysis.

- Mary Ellen Gray asked how the alignment would affect the Pomeroy Trail. Sarah said it may need to be shifted somewhat. Mike Fortner opined that the route would result in more cars on the north campus, a location with a lot of pedestrian activity, and disrupt the Pomeroy Trail. Heather Dunigan said construction of the Pomeroy Trail had been dedicated to bicyclists and pedestrians. Jim noted that Emily Bell Lane could be used as a connector to the Country Club. Alan noted this road is in the City's utility plans for the provision of water.
- Mayuresh observed that the shifts in trips is not significant and asked who would use the road. Sarah agreed about the trip shifts. He asked if the primary purpose would be to serve students. Jim replied that it would provide pedestrian and bicyclist as well as secondary vehicular access to north campus. Bob McBride asked about the University's plans once the towers are torn down. Mike Falkowski questioned if the benefits were worth the costs. Sarah said DelDOT would not be in favor of the road for vehicles. DelDOT's recommendation is to make it a bicycle only facility. Alan said the analysis needs to include connections to Paper Mill Road, New London Road, and Nottingham Road before it could be properly considered and that he would not supports its use for bicyclists only.
- David Athey asked how the benefits would be weighed against the costs specifically noting the stream crossing just west of North College Avenue that would be needed as well as the grading that would be needed at the North College Avenue intersection. Sarah said preliminary calculations indicate that the TID fee would increase by about 50% for relatively little benefit. Joe generally agreed that the three roads Alan had mentioned should be included in analyses related to the new connector road and the benefits may not be realized for another 25 years. Mayuresh repeated his question about the purpose of the road and asked if it should be added later. Jim explained his original thought was that the route could be an alternate to Cleveland Avenue for large vehicles to get to UD's campus. Sarah agreed but also said a fee should not be collected for a project that may never get built and indicated that the connector could be added later, if required, when the TID agreement will be updated in future based on monitoring program. David suggested tabling further discussion so other items on the agenda could be discussed. Sarah agreed to bring further analyses to the May meeting but thought it was doubtful DelDOT would change its opinion. She said it was possible that some existing intersections could perform worse as a result of the new connector road.
- Sarah continued her presentation with a list of potential improvements. See meeting materials. She said a roundabout at the Chapel Street / Wyoming Road intersection would solve a lot of problems. She also discussed various bicycle improvements. Alan asked how the connector road previously discussed would impact those projects and said competing projects should be avoided. Sarah reiterated that more analyses would be done for next month's meeting. Heather asked how bicycle improvements would affect signal optimization.
- Sarah then reviewed the latest version of the Service Standards. She noted that the biggest change in travel was shown to be 78 seconds. She suggested that a maximum travel time change of 80 seconds would be included in the Service Standards.
- Alan asked about a bridge for bicyclists over the railroad tracks at Academy Street. Sarah said it was included in paragraph G. He indicated that changes in the documents being specifically referenced in the TID agreement would make the TID obsolete and instead recommended they be linked by reference. Sarah asked if "City" should be dropped. Mike Fortner said the City's Bicycle Plan is

dated 2014. Alan suggested “currently adopted City, County, and State bicycle plans”. Sarah concurred. Savannah asked if the County plan includes input from WILMAPCO. Heather replied the County plan was written by WILMAPCO.

- Sarah said the improvements offered by Bike Newark would be discussed at the next meeting include a new east – west route. Alan also asked about the accuracy of the approximate project costs that had been provided by Bike Newark. The Committee discussed removal of the exhibit prior to posting on the City’s website but David Athey suggested that a caveat be inserted instead.
- Sarah continued her presentation with a brief discussion in response to Alan’s questions at the March meeting about how projects would be prioritized. She said the Committee would recommend improvements that would then be reviewed by the Planning Commission and then City Council. DelDOT would prepare cost estimates and identify conflicts. That information would then be reviewed again by the Planning Commission and City Council who would make decisions about priorities or conflicts. Finally, the fee schedule would be prepared accordingly.
- Alan asked Mary Ellen if it was appropriate for the Planning Commission to resolve conflicts. Mary Ellen replied that City Council would ultimately decide. Heather noted the role of the City’s Traffic Committee too. Alan asked who would make decisions on project details. Sarah said the Planning Commission would be involved at the concept level but details resolved in the design phase. Mayuresh asked if DelDOT makes recommendations about a preferred alternative and Sarah said they only present alternatives
- Sarah closed he presentation by stating that transit improvements would be identified by the service providers. However, the committee will need to allocate an amount of funds to go towards transit improvements
- There were no public comments.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.